

## REMARKS

The Application has been reviewed in light of the Office Action dated October 6, 2005. Claims 1-9 are presented for examination; Claim 1 has been amended to better define what Applicants regard as the invention and Claims 2-9 have been added. Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Claim 1 stands rejected under 35 USC § 102(b) as allegedly anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,832,451 (*Flake et al.*).

Applicant points to Claim 1, which recites “at least one of the broker database and the travel history database stores information in a plurality of data sets in a plurality of formats.” As explained in paragraph 25 of the Specification, “the ability to store various data sets that have different formats facilitates the storage of data associated with the financial transaction instrument by multiple and unrelated owners of the data sets.”

As understood by the Applicants, *Flake*, on the other hand, provides an automated travel service management system for use by individual travel agencies. As stated at Column 3, lines 13-15, “[s]ystem 10 is preferably used to provide customer travel services, by one or more travel agents employed by agency 12.” That is, the system of *Flake* is intended for operation within a single travel agency and, consequently, fails to integrate more than one travel service supplier onto its network. Indeed, as illustrated in Figure 1, the information system 10 is localized within the travel agency 12. This point is further confirmed at Column 5, lines 13-16 of *Flake*, indicating that a “travel agency” is depicted in Figure 1. Therefore, the system of *Flake* is restricted to use by a single travel service supplier, *i.e.*, one travel agency and hence its data format. Nothing has been found

in *Flake* that would teach or suggest to “[store] information in a plurality of data sets in a plurality of formats,” as recited in Claim 1.

Based on the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 1 is patentable over *Flake*, and kindly request withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b).


Independent Claim 4 is directed to method for facilitating transactions among travel service suppliers and travel service buyers corresponding to Claim 1, and is therefore likewise seen as patentable over the cited reference. Independent Claim 7 is directed to an integrated travel industry system and also recites features similar to those discussed above with respect to Claim 1, and is therefore likewise seen as patentable over the cited reference.

In addition, the other claims in this application depend from one or another of the independent claims discussed above and, therefore, are submitted to be patentable for at least the same reasons. Since each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, individual consideration of the patentability of each claim on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request favorable reconsideration and the allowance of the present application.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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